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CRS/SAC

Cease-Fire Developments

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8 May 1973

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Cease-Fire Developments

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LAOSSouvanna on Negotiations

Prime Minister Souvanna on 7 May told Charge Dean that he was pleased by the steady reduction in cease-fire violations over the past several days and commented that the decline in fighting indicates the government is no longer under pressure to accept unreasonable Pathet Lao negotiating demands. Souvanna maintained that no progress can be made in talks as long as the Communists continue to link military and political problems. Based on his private discussions with Phoumi Vongvichit, Souvanna is convinced progress in Lao negotiations is linked to movement in Cambodia and Vietnam and said Phoumi must await "the green light from Hanoi" before moving ahead. [REDACTED]

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US Aircraft Down

A US contract cargo plane was missing yesterday over Communist held territory north of the Plaine des Jarres after it ran out of fuel. Search efforts are under way for the US pilot and four Lao on board. This is the first US aircraft lost since the cease-fire in February. The Communists have not yet commented. [REDACTED]

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CAMBODIAThe Military Situation

Government forces are meeting only light Communist resistance in their latest attempt to reopen Route 5. At last report, only a six-mile section of the highway about 35 miles northwest of Phnom Penh remained to be cleared. Southeast of Phnom Penh the operation to reopen Route 30 was temporarily suspended on 8 May. Farther south, government efforts to expand Takeo's western perimeter have been halted by stiff Communist resistance. [REDACTED]

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SOUTH VIETNAMICCS Withdrawn from Duc Co

The last two ICCS members (an Indonesian and a Hungarian) were pulled out of a central highland border checkpoint at Duc Co on 7 May. The Viet Cong have portrayed the withdrawal as "temporary" and for health reasons, and have promised to improve living conditions at the site, a former South Vietnamese special forces camp now under Communist control. It appears that the Communists view the ICCS presence in this area as a useful buffer against any possible GVN attempts to regain area strongpoints held in the past by the government side. [REDACTED]

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the Communists are concerned that the ICCS pull-out from Duc Co may be followed by renewed government attacks in the area. The Communists also apparently fear government action around Ben Het in Kontum Province, if the ICCS evacuates its position at that camp. The Communists are imposing severe restrictions on ICCS movements in and out of the camp. [REDACTED]

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